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SEMI-CENTENNIAL

OF THE

Berkeley Street Congregational Church

(FORMERLY PINE STREET),

BOSTON.

Commemorated Sept. 30, 1877.

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BOSTON:
NOYES, SNOW, AND COMPANY.
1877.

MUSEUM
OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON

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ORDER OF EXERCISES.

10½ O'Clock, A.M.

Historical Discourse.

By Rev. WILLIAM BURNET WRIGHT.

Intermission.

1 O'Clock, P.M.

Communion.

At which Rev. Dr. BLAGDEN and other Ministers will assist.

3 O'Clock, P.M.

Sabbath-School Celebration.

With Addresses by Rev. W. W. NEWTON, and others.

7½ O'Clock, P.M.

Home Gathering.

The Parish for Fifty Years. By S. B. ALLEN, Esq.
Original Poem. By GILBERT NASH, Esq.
The Boston Pulpit for Fifty Years. By Rev. I. N. TARBOX, D.D.
Fellowship of the Churches. By Rev. S. E. HERRICK.
With other Addresses and Letters.

A Collation will be served in the Vestry for those who come from a distance.

ORIGINAL HYMN.

BY JOSEPH A. TORREY.

NOT alone by cloud and flame,
Israel out of bondage came;
But, O Lord, in every age,
Thou dost guide man's pilgrimage.

Strange and dark to feeble sense
Seem the ways of providence;
Yet thy hand upholds and saves,
Though it leads through Red-Sea waves.

While the thunders of thy law
Fill our trembling souls with awe,
By thyself thine own are fed,
Daily, with the heavenly bread.

Lord, this day we would confess
Thy dear love and faithfulness,
Which hath led, through toil and tears,
This thy church these many years.

Here our fathers, brave though few,
Builded better than they knew:
Faith and hope their labor cheered,
Nor in vain these walls they reared.

For, redeemed by heavenly grace,
Sinners here found resting-place;
Here by toil and suffering tried,
Saints through faith were sanctified.

Lord, who didst our fathers lead,
As of old thy chosen seed,
Lead us by thy mighty hand,
Till we reach the promised land!

ORIGINAL HYMN.

BY GILBERT NASH.

SHOUT the glorious name of Jesus,
Captain of the host of God,
Valiant leader, tried and faithful,
In whose steps the fathers trod.
Wave his mighty banner o'er us,
For the day draws on apace,
And the field spreads wide before us:
Every soldier to his place.

Forward now the battle surges,
Rests on us the victory;
Not in vain our Captain's presence,
Falter not beneath his eye.

Here the fathers strove with patience,
Now in darkness, now in light,
And for fifty years his standard
Bore aloft in every fight.

Shout the soul-reviving legend,
Jesus, Prince, Immanuel!
From the fathers came the watchword,
Let the sons preserve it well.
And as in the past have gathered
Clouds to vanish in the light,
So may all the coming shadows
Open to a sky more bright!

HISTORICAL DISCOURSE.

"Remember the days of old." — DEUT. xxxii. 7.

YOUR committee earnestly desired that Dr. Dexter, your former pastor, should occupy the pulpit this morning. No other man, we think, could use the time so profitably as he. We were therefore painfully disappointed when we asked him to preach our Memorial Sermon, to learn, that, while his feelings inclined him to do any thing we asked, imperative hinderances prevented him from accepting our invitation. Affectionate esteem for him is one of the strongest sentiments you feel today. Every brick in this building bears silent witness to his successful service. In your hearts he has written himself ineffaceably. Some of you were baptized by him; some of you by him were joined in wedlock. Your hearth-stones and your

graves alike repeat his name. Though absent, he is not forgotten here.

. . . . . .

At the beginning of this century the Old South was the only church of our denomination in Boston. In 1808 Park Street was added. In 1822 the Union Church — now our neighbor on Columbus Avenue — began a vigorous life. In 1823 the city experienced a powerful revival. Lyman Beecher, Mr. Payson, President Humphries, Dr. Taylor, and other giants of those days, came here to aid the pastors in their arduous but grateful work. Among the fruits of this revival two new churches arose, one in Green Street and one in Hanover Street.

In 1825 God breathed again his quickening Spirit upon the city. Of the two new churches formed within a twelvemonth, one was crowded to overflowing, the other well filled. Dr. Beecher's inquiry-meetings had rapidly increased in attendance from three to three hundred. It was difficult to obtain a seat in either of the older churches. Plainly another church was needed; Dr. Beecher

thought two. Only twice as hopeful as other men this time, — rare moderation for *him!* Yet his plan was more colossal than appeared. He believed the revival had begun which should encircle the world. These two churches which he hoped to found, with such pastors as he planned to give them, — Dr. Edwards from Andover, and Dr. Skinner of Philadelphia, — were, in his view, advances toward the speedy conquest not of Boston, not of New England only, but of the whole earth.

When, therefore, the pastors and laymen assembled in his vestry to consider the planting of one new church, heard him propose *two*, his ardor was contagious. They adopted his proposal with enthusiasm, — great enthusiasm; $20,000 worth, at least. For so much was subscribed upon the instant, with promise of more to follow, of which $10,000 did follow speedily. A committee of three from each Orthodox Congregational church in the city was appointed to designate from their respective memberships suitable persons to constitute the new churches. *Suitable* persons.

Picked men and women these were to be. No rubbish could serve for such work. Only Philip's phalanx can hope to carry the Master's standard around the earth.

In these proceedings I discern animating the churches, *not* the spirit which loves to rest in Gilead, but that which answers in the temple, "Lord, here am I: send me!" No man knew, until the Saturday after this first meeting, but he might be chosen to leave the soft seat in his religious home, and go forth somewhat as the Plymouth men, who went forth on Christmas Day from ease and safety, "some to fell timber, some to saw, some to rive, and some to carry," and some to fight for the Master's sake. We may learn much from these men. Perhaps there is no lesson we more need to learn than this: that conversion is God's anointing, not to ease but to service; the evidence thereof to be found not in girding ourselves, and walking whither we would, but in stretching forth our hands for another to gird us, and carry us, if need be, whither we would *not*.

These were the persons who so stretched forth

their hands, and were carried into this church of our inheritance: —

From Hanover-street Church. — Eliphalet Kimball, Lydia Kimball, Isabella Meston, Joseph Morrill.

From Old South Church. — Charles Cleaveland, James Clapp, Willard Williams, Robert L. Bird, Joseph H. Eayers, Charles C. Barry, Charles Messenger, Mehitable Cleveland, Eliza Clapp, Betsy O. Williams, Lucy Bird, Mary C. Eayers, Mary Green.

From Union Church. — John Harmon, Andrew Bradshaw, Gardner Tufts, Josiah Waterman, Hiram Bosworth, Dixon L. Gill, Nathaniel W. Withington, Cornelius Briggs, Thomas Lamson, Hannah Waterman, Hannah Bradshaw, Margaret Tufts, Eliza Gill, Anna Lamson, Abigail Lamson, Lydia Towne.

From Park-street Church. — Marcus Whiting, Nathan Barrett, Josiah F. Bumstead, John Robinson, jun., John Gammell, jun., Eunice N. Whiting, Lucy D. Bumstead, Catherine S. Hilton.

From the Church in West Brookfield. — Rev. Asa Rand.

From the Church in Ashburnham. — Mary C. Rand.

From the Church of the Theological Seminary, Andover. — Rev. Ornan Eastman.

The Council convened in Park-street vestry to constitute this company a church. All the Boston churches of our order were represented. "The Recorder" of Sept. 7, 1827, reports: —

"There are seven Orthodox Congregational churches in Boston now. Not many years ago Park-street was born; then Union, where first the plan of sending delegates to strengthen young churches was adopted. In a short time she was able to send her re-enforcements also. Hanover-street has had a house of worship open but eighteen months, and now sends eighty-two members, principally to a church in its own neighborhood,[1] besides about twenty more to a church in Cambridgeport, where a house of worship has been built; making more than one hundred, still leaving more than three times the number it had at its organization."

"But there is that scattereth, and yet increaseth." Is not this written again here before our eyes? Not in Hebrew this time; not in any *dead* language! Yet let us remember those last words spoken by Brother Green, we think, to the twelve hundred and more there listening: "All the hope of these churches lies in their being clothed with humility." So we are born, Sept. 1, 1827. Twins we are, Salem-street our sister. We the younger, — a weak infant, the weaker of the twain. But the two strong Boston churches first on the list of this Council which summons us to be — one of them, perhaps the most robust in New England,

[1] Salem-street Church.

certainly the most hopeful — shall finish their work and disappear while we are growing to be fifty years old. Another still shall be born and die while we are bearing each year more fruit.

God loves to lay the foundations of strength in weakness, our Bible tells us. But, if we could not read our Bible, would not the stars that form the milky way remind us that Hercules must begin a puling infant?

We are only forty-four in number. Nineteen of us are women. None of us are rich. But we are resolute. We mean to be faithful. We believe in a living God. This, time will show.

We have many roots. For this Congregationalism that rocks our cradle is a unit. The churches around us are one body, with one spirit. We are here, not because we wished to come, but because they have sent us forth to fight their battle. The battle is ours only because it is theirs.

Our house on Pine Street, of which the corner-stone was laid last June, will not be ready for us until next December. Meantime we must meet in one another's houses as the early Christians

did. Thus we shall better learn to know and love each other, though we do not think of that. The delay is annoying. We are thinking of our new meeting-house, and wishing it was ready. So, when Mrs. Christian Baker gives us one hundred dollars, we vote to buy a clock with it. In fifty years it will be ticking accurate time. Perhaps we do not enough consider, that, by keeping us longer than we wish close crowded in each other's houses, God is moulding us into a *family*. We are led by habit to greet each other in neighborly fashion as we arrive; we are forced to sit close together in circles, facing; to be introduced to each other; to know each other as might not be possible if we met in a public place, and sat in rigid rows behind each other's backs. No dismal silences, as of men doing penance, while we wait for the minister to begin; no smothered whisperings, as if we feared Satan were listening to catch us in our talk: but hearty genial conversation prepares us to sing and pray together. Perhaps a main cause of that genial atmosphere which will make our prayer-meetings so precious in 1877,

will make them the best enjoyed of all church-meetings, is this. A thwarting Providence compels us to look steadily into each other's eyes. It is a priceless possession for a church, the ability to meet and talk together of Christ and his kingdom *naturally*, as men converse in other places on other themes. This is not easily learned. There was reason why Providence destroyed the temple, and forced Christianity to begin in private homes. Even Paul speaks best when addressing "the church that is in thy house."

We have troubles, too, that need much talking over. The parents that called us into being have left us no money, but a legacy of debt. Very heavy for our shoulders is this burden; but we will not flinch. We lack pastor, officers, money, and much; but *this* we have, — love to God, and love to one another. Having this, all other needful things will follow; slowly perhaps, but surely, in God's time.

Let us remember always that faith and love are the only essentials to a church. Let us teach our children that truth.

We shall have difficulties, we perceive. When Cromwell could see no path before him, he was wont to assemble his brethren for prayer. Together they continued day and night, one succeeding another; fasting, — not for penance as the Pope would have them, but, like their Master, forgetting to eat bread, — continued beseeching God for light, until light came. And light always *came;* victory, too, *at last.*

So we will do, and victory will come to us.

We resolve, —

"1. That having become voluntarily associated together as the professed disciples of Christ, to extend the influence of gospel truth in the south part of the city, it is the duty of every member of this church daily to consider with fixed attention the high responsibility which rests upon us, and the weighty consequences that will certainly result from our proceedings.

"2. That each member of the church endeavor to cultivate a spirit of daily communion with God in prayer, and in reading his word; and thereby to attain a more spiritual frame of mind.

"3. That each member of the church be recommended to observe a season of special prayer every day, between the hours of one and three o'clock P.M., for the descent of the Holy Spirit, for the enlargement and sanctification of the church, and, until we are blessed with a pastor, for the bestowment of this essential gift."

True foundations, these. A house built upon these will stand when the rains fall and the floods come.

We have not yet learned to be anxious about our souls; we spend no time considering whether we are happy, whether we shall be saved. *That* is another's business; not ours at all. But to consider our responsibilities, to walk with God, and do our work, that *is* our business; that only. Whenever we are in doubt about this, we have a day of prayer. We pray thus for a pastor, for many things.

I think we shall live, being thus minded, more that fifty years. A plant that shall endure so long, — in dry ground too, amid whirlwinds, such as Mr. Allen will tell you of to-night, — and bear such fruit as you have borne for many years, such fruit as appears this day of 1877, must contain vitality of a high sort, — *what* vitality, these prayers explain.

Brother Armstrong gives us a communion service, for which we are grateful. We have formed our creed and rules. We must have deacons to

lead us to the Lord's table. A day is appointed for prayer that God will guide us to select the right men.

After such preparation, —

Brothers Eliphalet Kimball,
James Clapp,
Andrew Bradshaw, —

appear to us the fittest men. On the Lord's Day before the communion, with prayer and laying-on of hands, these are solemnly inducted into office.

We have no pastor yet. There is in Philadelphia a mighty man of God. He is there intrenched in the affections of a rich and influential church; none stronger in the land. Will he leave that garden of the Lord, to tend this feeble plant? Some think yes. Dr. Beecher thinks yes; indeed, had this in mind before we were born. Are not the strong set to bear the infirmities of the weak? Dr. Beecher thinks he will come; goes to Philadelphia, persuades him, brings him to us, — not without sharp protest from Presbytery, tears from the church there, and some fire-sparks from Dr. Barnes, I hear.

So Dr. Thomas Skinner is installed over us, with sermon by Dr. Edward Beecher, and address by Rev. Richard H. Storrs, not yet a doctor. Our hopes are high now; we expect to reach Canaan *soon*. But, his health failing, we must let our pastor go. This we do with much sadness, but without discouragement. Do we not see the pigeons fluttering about our eaves? — near kinsmen these of sparrows, flying scrolls on which wonderful words for faith and hope to feed on have been written by One we know.

A year passes, and Brother Brown is called from Cazenovia to be our pastor. He is a faithful man, much loved by us, and honored by all. But now ends the period during which the churches that called us into being, and bade us fight there for them, have agreed to help feed us. Our money quite gives out; something must be done. The parent churches are asked, *what?* They appoint a committee, of which Jeremiah Everts is chairman, to consider that question. Committee considers, and answers, "Nothing can be done by us." We must shift for ourselves henceforth. No help, even

against the debt donated by the parent churches. Pastor Brown feels that he must go. There is much regret on both sides; but there appears no other honest way. It seems dark to us now; not yet dark *enough* for the stars to come out. I am told they make the finest lace in cellars, working by a single pencil of light. So much light we have; enough to work by, — no more than that. We are making lace that others will wear proudly enough in fifty years.

Pastor and people part, not because they would, but because they must.

So is it, too, with Rev. A. A. Phelps, who comes next from Hopkinton to help us; with Rev. Brother Boies from South Hadley, who follows him.

Never a trace of feelings other than the finest; reverence, confidence, affection, between us and our pastors. Only we part because no other honest way appears. We, the lace-makers, grow paler for lack of sun, but work on.

Other perplexities come. Those which assail all churches begin to trouble us. What shall we

do for our absent members? We pray, fasting, over that. We vote to give them "sojourning certificates;" cards of admission to Christian fellowship in other places, not withdrawing our own in any measure.

What shall we do with those who cannot, or do not, believe all that we believe? with those who believe *more* than we do, which is worse? We pray long and earnestly over this, but get no new light. Having once spoken so clearly through his Son, God does not speak again. We are forgetting the Master's instructions: "By their *fruits* ye shall know them." Not by their *opinions*, not by their professions; by their fruits only. When we shall learn to walk by *that* command, all these perplexities will end. Looking at the boughs, we can easily tell, "this is a fig," "this is a thistle;" but when we strive to penetrate the roots, and analyze the sap to learn its quality, we only destroy it by our chemistry. Gradually we shall learn to judge men by their conduct, not their creed.

As it is, we are by no means careless of con-

duct. A brother applies for admission to our church. He is a milkman, and delivers milk upon the Sabbath. An excellent man, it seems; unexceptionable except for the milk on Sunday. We discuss his case many times, and pray over it, fasting. We vote at last we cannot receive him; for, in our judgment, delivering milk on Sunday is "an open and alarming profanation of the Holy Day." Perhaps none of us have infants who must have fresh milk on all days, or perish. Perhaps we have not sufficiently observed that for their sakes God makes his cows deliver milk on Sundays. But this is a trivial matter. The important thing we have observed, and do remember. It is this: we must do what we think right. Absolute loyalty to conscience is the lever which opens the gates of light. The way of wisdom will be found at last by all who seek it by that torch.

We have voted that the church-meeting on Friday evening shall be open to church-members only. Presently we modify that somewhat, and vote "that we have permission to bring Christian friends who visit us occasionally from the country,

or from a distance." From time to time a special vote is passed allowing Mr. A or Mrs. B — not members of the church, I suppose — to attend our prayer-meeting.

A hard trial this, to exclude our friends, our wives and children it may be, from the sweetest, helpfullest, blessedest place we know, — harder than keeping milkmen from our communion. But we must obey our conscience. It has begun to point toward the open door.

We are ten years old, almost. Our numbers have been steadily increasing. We have a vigorous Sabbath school. Indeed, our Sabbath school will always be the glory of our church; so identified the two will be, that no one will be able to distinguish church from school. We have Bible-classes, men and women remaining between Sunday services "to study God's word with godly men." We are sustaining a mission school, which meets in Franklin Schoolhouse. By and by we shall establish another, which, fostered into independent life, will shed much light where light is needed.[1]

[1] Lenox-street Church.

June 5, 1835, is memorable in our history. We must show now whether it is only milkmen to whom we can say "no" when our consciences command.

Brother Carpenter proposes to us a resolution, which Brother Crawford warmly seconds: —

That we think slavery wrong; contrary to God's will. That we will have no fellowship with it; will protest against it; will have with slave-holders no communion. We think God means us to utter our protest before all men. We cannot do much; we can do that.

This is a serious matter. We have business dealings with Southern men. This action of ours cannot be confined to Sunday: it will get into Monday; it will affect our pockets. We shall be called fanatics; we shall be told in many ways to mind our business. We think this is our business; we cannot yet see any profit in taking our place beside the slave. The day is still distant when Jesus shall appear the wise, and Judas the unwise. We do not even think of the time when Paul and Agrippa shall meet again, the monarch

without his crown, and the prisoner without his chains. No very thrifty way of shifting for ourselves, this passing anti-slavery resolutions, and we so much needing money: so it seems to some. But we know our Master came to set the captive free; we dare not omit repeating that, — shouting that in the loudest voice we have. We think it is not our first business to be thrifty.

We have many meetings to discuss this resolution. We know it is pleasanter to sit with Dives than with Lazarus, — pleasanter for a time; but we must pass our resolutions. We pass them thirty-three to twelve, — men only voting, — and write down our names to stand in evidence against us, whether we are wise or unwise. The first name I read of those who voted for the resolution, — voted to suffer with Lazarus rather than feast with Dives, — is this: —

"C. C. BARRY."

"Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto Me."

Years pass. There is helpful sympathy between the churches. Hanover-street, Park-street, Old

South, and others, accept our invitations, and use our house during periods when their own houses are closed for repairs. I believe there is no church of our denomination in the city, existing in 1840, which has not held its prayer-meetings within our walls. These prayers have hallowed our house, — will help us always.

We are accustomed in these years, — 1835–45, — to join with other churches in religious services on Fourth of July. We have not yet learned that God is not in the Constitution. We think he is there; that he has written his name more plainly there than we can write it. We passed those anti-slavery resolutions because we thought so.

1840 finds us without a pastor. A young man has preached to us, toward whom our hearts have been drawn in a wonderful way. His face seemed to us as the face of an angel. We wish him to come and be our shepherd. Some fear he is too young; not for our sakes, but for his own. Will not such work as must be done here break his health? — a delicate body with a priceless jewel in

it that must not be lost in that way; but others repeat what Jeremy Taylor urged upon Laud, — "His youth is a fault he will certainly correct — in time." Meanwhile we can do more ourselves: ask him to exchange frequently; use him not as a pedestal for us to rest on; but as a keystone of the arch, teaching us to lean hard upon each other. So we call him; but he does not come, — fears he is not qualified, distrusts himself, but trusts God so wholly that a year afterward, when we renew our call earnestly, unanimously, he thinks it is God's call, and comes.

Now for more than six years we are blessed, and are grateful. The arch is strong with such a keystone, we leaning upon each other. We have a pastor now who can be best described, I think, in Coleridge's words spoken of another. A man, this Austin Phelps, "full of the love of wisdom, and the wisdom of love." Have you not there nearly the ideal pastor? "Full of the love of wisdom, and the wisdom of love." I challenge any man who has known Professor Phelps, to answer if this is not his portrait.

Our pastures are green now, the waters stiller than they have been. We have learned to shift for ourselves, but we must learn to shift for others also. Andover calls; we take council together, — we fast and pray. God's kingdom, we know, is larger than our church. If this is God's will, we must yield. We must try to be cheerful too, — though in that we do not altogether succeed.

Nothing in all the fifty years' records of the church is more beautiful, I think, than the letters we sent to Professor Phelps, and the reply we received from him, when, after he had taught Andover to love him as we loved him, the darkest of earthly bereavements wrapped him in its pall.

In 1849 we call a young man from Manchester. We find him in the height of usefulness; popular, loved, influential. We have had singular success in getting the best and ablest men from richer and more influential churches which wanted to keep them.

So Mr. Dexter — not yet a doctor — comes to

us. Now begin to appear in our records familiar names, — names that will be household words in 1877: Willett, Whittemore, Williams, Witherspoon. I might go up the alphabet to B and A, ending with Bird and Allen. But I have written "W" because much practice has made that letter the readiest to my pen.

Gradually our pastor earns a national reputation. Years of diligent study lift him among the first ecclesiastical scholars in the country; render him at last the highest living authority, I think, in questions of Congregational polity and history. The church, bound to him, becomes more conspicuous; is invited to sit in important councils, that its pastor's wisdom and learning may be heard in them; is summoned to Washington, Philadelphia, Columbus, Chicago, San Francisco.

The toil which has raised a light that is seen so far, which keeps it burning steadily, is not allowed to interfere with more obscure but not less worthy labors.

The light which distant churches and foremost men seek to help them read aright their perplexi-

ties, shines constantly in our homes, and enables us to read in our private joys and sorrows God's messages and meanings. I need not repeat this to you, who have found in Dr. Dexter a wise counsellor and a faithful friend.

Feb. 1, 1856, we send this letter, a part of which I will read, to a church that has invited us to counsel it: —

The Pine-street Church in Boston, Mass., to the First Congregational Church in Niagara, sendeth greeting:

Dear Brethren, — We have been interested in what we have heard of your history thus far as an outpost of our denomination, in the locality which you providentially occupy, and we congratulate you upon the good favor with which God has smiled upon your beginning. We especially hope and pray that you may have grace to contend both earnestly and wisely for the faith once delivered to the saints. . . . May the God of simplicity, of purity, and of peace, give you great success in your work, and make you happy in it! As a token of our fraternal remembrance and Christian interest in you, we beg your acceptance of the accompanying communion service, which may serve as a memorial of the pleasant and pregnant fact . . . that Congregationalism joyfully recognizes . . . oneness of the Church by faith and love in Christ our Head.

Wishing you grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord,

We subscribe ourselves your brethren in Christ,

THE PINE-STREET CHURCH,
By the hands of
H. M. DEXTER, *Pastor.*
JOEL WHEELER, } *Deacons.*
Z. ALLEN, }
J. P. BIRD, *Clerk.*

Soon after, the reply is read to us, — a glad reply, full of surprise and gratitude. Worth doing, this seems; a deed that teaches much of the communion of the churches.

About this time a legacy is left us by Mrs. Abby Carpenter: $200 for the benefit of the poor widows. On account of some defect in the drawing of the will, the law declines to give it to us; but the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society — residuary legatees — gladly disregard the informality, and give us what Mrs. Carpenter intended us to receive.

A time of great anxiety comes upon us. We fear our church must be sold. Money is scarce.

We ask our sister churches for advice; they meet, pastors and laymen, and advise us unanimously to sell our Pine-street house, and move to the corner of Berkeley and Tremont Streets. As at first they planted us there, now they transplant us here. They offer cordial sympathy, and material aid if needed. They tell us that this is the spot they wish us to occupy. Through troubles which we do not yet understand, it may be God is driving us out of Egypt.

The Pine-street Church is sold. We accept the invitation of the Church of the Messiah to worship in their house until we shall have another roof. But a letter is received from Alpheus Hardy and John C. Proctor: they have secured — for a time — control of the old church, and offer it to us without charge. This they have done without our request or knowledge. No claim have we upon these brethren; only our Master is theirs too, they know.

After this, for some months, we worship in Williams Hall, until April, 1861, when we enter this house.

1861. — There have been many changes since 1835, — this among them: other churches have passed anti-slavery resolutions; political parties have voted them; the nation has seen, and recorded in its heart, "that slaveholding is contrary to the will of God, and must not longer be fellowshipped." Lazarus and Dives have not changed places, but twenty-five years have taught most that purple may serve to gather very ruinous moths, and that beings watch over Lazarus other than the dogs that lick his sores, and grow fat on that.

But this resolution, which most at last have taken, has been by many delayed too long. It must now be written with materials other than ink and paper. The fine linen must be scraped into lint. Twenty-five years only, and the thirty-three who believed and declared slavery to be not God's will for this nation, looking from many places might have seen a notable confirmation of their judgment.

A Sunday morning. Sermon suddenly suspended for the day. This house occupied by

our women scraping lint and folding bandages, to be sent where fire and sword are compelling all men to know that God is in the Constitution.

Are you surprised to learn, after hearing our history, that one hundred young men went from us to battle with the Rebellion? Such fruit is borne by a certain memorable seed, planted by thirty-three of us, five and thirty years ago.

And those whose names are carved upon that marble, those who gave their lives to break the fetters, have they learned to regret their sacrifice, standing as they do where the captive is without his chain, and the monarch without his crown?

Dr. Dexter once informed me that had it not been for the war, and the consequent inability of many to pay subscriptions they had made, this house would have been dedicated without a debt. That being so, there is honor even in our debt. Think of it as a part of our contribution to our country. We know One who willingly became poor, that many through his poverty might be made rich.

In 1867 Dr. Dexter decides that he must leave

us to take charge of "The Congregationalist." Eighteen years of honorable toil. Of these, and of the whole forty years now passed, you will find a brief but comprehensive survey in the Manual of our Church.

In 1867 you called me from Chicago to become your pastor. Perhaps if I had known then as I do now the grace, the dignity, the learning, of the men who for forty years had occupied this pulpit, I should not have dared to enter it. To minister among a people accustomed, by experience or tradition, to the ministrations of such pastors as you have had, from Dr. Skinner to Dr. Dexter, is an undertaking from which a braver man than I might shrink. Yet they ploughed so well, and sowed so bountifully, that the spiritual harvests we have reaped have naturally followed.

It grieves me to omit much that might be profitably said of the first forty years of your history. The deficiency will be, in part, supplied before the day is done, for I have refrained from those subjects which fall within the domains to be occupied by Dr. Tarbox, who will tell you of the

Boston pulpit during the fifty years past; by Mr. Allen, who will repeat the parish history; and by those who, this afternoon, will tell you of the Sunday school. Still I would gladly read longer from the old church records. I leave these forty years with profoundest reverence for the work and worth of those who have preceded us. The followers of such fathers can read with an orient flush of hope: "Showing mercy unto the thousandth generation of them that love me and keep my commandments."

We need to march well if we would keep step with such file-leaders. We would not have these of ours degenerate days. We would not have this church, which has shone so long with a steadily increasing light, decrease in radiance while we feed its fires. Therefore let our lamps be trimmed and burning, and we girded as servants who wait for our Lord.

Of the ten years last passed I can afford to be silent; their experiences are fresh in your minds. This day is not meant to be a memorial of ourselves, but of our fathers.

For your love, undisturbed during ten years by one unkind deed or word, it is permitted me here among old friends to thank you. But public expressions like this have small significance. We know each other: that is enough.

One word needs to be added where all may hear it. A little less than a year ago I resigned my office of pastor over you. It gave me keen pain to do so. It would be a false humility in me, and an injustice to you, if I should imply that the thought of separation caused you less pain than it caused me. Yet the financial difficulties from which the whole land suffered pressed so heavily upon you, that I did not see how you could continue without incurring debts which ultimately might swallow the rich property you own. You thought otherwise; you said, "Remain at least a little longer: leave now, and the life of the church will be imperilled." Four months passed; your finances steadily improved; you asked me to withdraw my resignation. I hesitated two months; all the expenses of our worship were met each month without withdrawing our contri-

butions from those general charities dear to all the churches of our order. Again you signified your wish that I should remain. I then withdrew my resignation, and am again your pastor.

Our working membership is larger than I have ever known it to be. Our expenses are met as they accrue. There is a revival spirit among us; we stand upon a firm foundation; we can provide things honest in the sight of all men; we do thank God, and we have taken courage.

It has been said — not by authority, but by ignorant rumor — that we are a mission church. If by that is meant that we are sustained in the least degree by pecuniary resources other than our own, or that we lean on any strength save God and ourselves, it is not true.

If it means that we are a missionary church, the subjects of our labors every human being we can benefit, the report is true. To that hundreds can bear witness. We are seeking not those who may help us, but those whom we may help.

God is our refuge and our strength. For fifty years, whenever we have leaned on him, and

trusted in our own efforts, he has never failed us. When we have weakly looked to any other help, it has failed us.

Fathers, mothers, who fifty years ago offered this church to God in baptism of prayer, look upon us, your children, to-day. May your prayers continue to prevail!

Young men, who stand around me like Napoleon's guard; elders, whose wisdom and experience form our richest treasure; deacons and officers, whose fidelity has been proved so well; daughters, sisters, whose devotion fills this church with fragrant odors, — let it be our united prayer, our strong endeavor so to do our work, that, when the coming half century shall have passed away, other men and women, joined in this fellowship, worshipping God and loving one another, may be able to think of us as we have cause to think of those who founded this church fifty years ago.

THE PARISH.

BY STILLMAN B. ALLEN.

THE parish as a legal corporation, bounded by fixed geographical lines, connected with established religious worship, a union of Church and State on a small scale, practically exists no longer.

With it have disappeared the days when every person of suitable age was obliged to attend church under penalties which were vigorously enforced; when men and women walked or rode on horseback many miles through the snow-storms of winter to attend worship where there was neither furnace, fire-place, nor stove to raise the temperature above freezing; where all the audience sat shivering, except here and there a woman who had a small tin box known as a

foot-stove, in which were contained a few coals from a neighbor's house, giving a feeble warmth to chilled feet. In those days, pompous grand jurors and tithing-men arrested men on the highways for travelling on the Lord's Day, and reprimanded or punished children who could not keep awake during the long sermons, some of which, it is said, lasted two hours!

After the parish had passed away, its place was supplied by what is now known as the "society," which is an incorporated association of persons who own or hire pews in a house for religious worship. It usually includes nearly or quite all the male members of the church occupying the meeting-house, together with some of the good, substantial men whose families or relatives are members of the church, or who are themselves Christian men in all but profession, and who are ready and willing to bear their share of the burdens. All contributions are voluntary, and there is no liability beyond their interest in the building. In our society, women have an equal voice and vote with men.

To both church and society the public owe a debt which they can never repay. Even pecuniarily, they are among the best investments which the people of a town or city can make. To-day the churches of Boston are a greater and better safeguard to property, and protection from violence and wrong, than all the police, court-houses, and jails in the county. Indeed, it is doubtful if a city of its size and with its heterogeneous population could exist without churches, and the influence growing out of them.

Many of these societies are poor, and many, following the drift of the last few years, are in debt; and all of them constantly require money to pay the expenses which congregations insist on requiring.

Berkeley-street Church is no exception to the general rule. From its organization to the present time it has borne a debt which has weighed heavily upon the hearts of its friends, but which has been on the whole carried bravely and hopefully, and never more so than now.

In March, 1827, the members of the five Or-

thodox Congregational churches in Boston — the Old South, Park-street, Essex-street, Green-street, and Hanover-street (afterward Bowdoin-square) — met to consider what should be done to extend religious influence, and decided that a new church should be founded. Dr. Lyman Beecher insisted that *two* could be built, and it was decided to do so. Land was bought for the Salem-street Church and for this, then known as the Pine-street Church, and $30,000 was raised by subscription. The larger part of the money was paid to the society on Salem Street; and when the Pine-street Church was completed, at a cost of $34,000, there remained on it a debt which has never been paid in full.

In September, 1827, fifty years ago, when Boston was a young city of less than fifty thousand people; when the salt waves of the bay rippled where this church now stands; when there were no railroads or street-cars here; before sewing-machines had been invented to save labor for women, or reaping and mowing machines for men; when the wonders of the telegraph and

telephone had not been dreamed of; before those angels of mercy to the suffering — chloroform and ether — had been discovered; before Daguerre and his successors had given us pictures of distant and lost friends; while streams of petroleum, with its heating and illuminating power, flowed undisturbed deep under the ground; when fires were lighted and guns fired with flint and steel, for friction-matches and percussion-caps were unknown; when millions of slaves were moaning almost unpitied in servitude; when the great West was a wilderness, and the wealth of California and Australia was undiscovered, — in September, fifty years ago, forty-two persons, nearly all from the adjoining churches, united in organizing the Pine-street Church. Among them was one brave and true-hearted young man, who has remained with us for half a century, always beloved, always honored, and now reverenced, Charles C. Barry.

The five neighbors agreed to pay one-half the expenses of this church for three years, and did so; after that time, this aid ceased.

The Society, as a legal body, was incorporated June 17, 1831, and assumed the debt, which had meantime been reduced by subscriptions and sales of pews to about $11,000, $10,000 of which was secured by mortgage.

From this time the church struggled on, under the ministry of Rev. Thomas H. Skinner, Rev. John Brown, Rev. Amos A. Phelps, and Rev. Artemas Boies, the debt steadily increasing, until 1836, when a determined effort was made, and the debt reduced to $10,000.

Up to this time none but church-members were allowed to attend the Friday night prayer-meetings; afterward, members were permitted to invite friends visiting them from out of town.

In June, 1835, after much discussion, it was voted that "slavery was contrary to the law of God." The vote stood thirty-three to twelve, and the name of our friend Charles C. Barry heads the majority list. How it would have astonished them all if they could have looked forward, and seen, amid the awful smoke and din of war, the chains fall from an oppressed race,

and four millions of people rise up redeemed and free!

Mr. Boies continued pastor until 1840, the church running along easily by adding yearly to its debt, until it reached the sum of $21,500; meantime, the tower being taken down to save the expense of keeping it in repair, and the bell being sold. In view of the discouragements and embarrassments of the church, Mr. Boies now resigned. Mr. Barry had, the year before, been elected Treasurer, an office which he continued to hold with honor for twenty-five years successively. He and others — none of the church being men of large means — now made another effort to retrieve their fortunes, and the debt was again reduced to $10,000.

In 1842 Rev. Austin Phelps was made pastor; and the church continued to prosper, and the congregation to steadily increase. Many persons united with the church, and on the surface was every appearance of prosperity; but away down underneath, shown clearly on the books of our friend Barry, was the terrible Micawber problem:

yearly expenses about $3,500, income about $2,000, — result, misery.

In 1849, Mr. Phelps having resigned to accept a professorship in the Theological Seminary at Andover, Rev. Henry Martyn Dexter was installed as pastor, and continued in that office for eighteen years. Mr. Dexter was a man of great learning, a constant and earnest student, of national reputation in matters of ecclesiastical history, law, and practice, a devoted and self-sacrificing friend to his church and people, to whom he gave so many of the best years of his life, receiving a salary of only $1,500, which was years afterwards increased by degrees to $2,500, a sum upon which no city pastor could live. He was beloved by all.

On the year of his settlement Mr. Barry was presented by the Society with a silver pitcher, in token of its gratitude for his services as Treasurer.

The next year, by advice of certain members of the Society, the church edifice was raised, renovated, and fitted with stores in the basement, the rent of which, it was hoped, would pay gradually the old debt, and the new one incurred by the alterations.

Speculations entered into by churches seldom pay, and this enterprise was not an exception to the general rule. For a time all went well. The house filled with worshippers until the rents yielded a surplus.

Then came the hard times of 1856–7. The store-rents fell off, the debt increased, and it was found doubtful if the church could be sustained there. It was then deemed wise to sell the house, pay the debt, and try to build in a better locality.

An act authorizing the sale was procured from the Legislature in 1858, and the property was sold for $40,000; and land purchased here, at the corner of Berkeley Street and Warren Avenue, at one dollar a foot, for a new church-edifice.

Plans were made for a meeting-house to contain twice as many sittings as the old one; and, of course, at half the annual expense for each occupant. Mr. Dexter acted as a special and most efficient committee to raise the amount necessary to complete the house so that the Society would have no debt. By most earnest efforts of the pastor, by much sacrifice on the part of the church,

and by the generous aid of other churches and individuals, about $28,000 was raised and guaranteed; and this, with the amount received from the sale of the Pine-street Meeting-House, and the pews to be sold, — most of which were engaged, — would have paid the debt and for the new house in which we now meet.

The corner-stone was laid July 23, 1860; and the house was completed in April, 1861, at a cost of $56,000, of which $11,400 was for the land; and the name was changed to Berkeley-street Church. But it was not God's will that the church should yet be free from debt. Before the building was completed, the war of the Rebellion broke out. Many of the members of the church and society were almost or quite impoverished, some subscriptions were not paid, many pews remained unsold, and during the interregnum expenses continued, and receipts fell off; so that, when the building was finally completed, the same old debt, now about $25,000, stared the tired but patient workers in the face.

In 1862, in accordance with a vote of the Soci-

ety, the property was mortgaged to the Lowell Savings Bank for $25,000, which mortgage still exists. This did not include all liabilities, for the following year there was a floating debt of $5,000, which was promptly paid by subscription.

In 1864 Mr. Barry reported that there was no floating debt, and resigned the office of Treasurer, which he had held a quarter of a century, and was "thanked" by the Society for his long and acceptable services.

During the war of the Rebellion one hundred and one young men enlisted from this church; and in 1864 this marble tablet was erected in memory of those who fell in the service of their country.

In 1867 Rev. Mr. Dexter resigned, to take the editorship of "The Congregationalist," a leading paper of our denomination, and that he might better pursue certain literary engagements; and soon after Rev. William Burnet Wright of Chicago was installed as his successor, and has been with us unto this time. His scholarship, his eloquence, his knowledge of the Scriptures, his great love for the people of his charge, his honesty of

purpose and hatred of all shams, his devotion to his church, his tenderness toward the sick, the troubled, and the erring, and the gentleness of manner and self-sacrificing spirit always shown to others, endeared him to his people; and many gathered round him, and church and congregation increased.

Three years later the debt had again grown to $30,000, and threatened us as of old. During the vacation and absence of the pastor, and largely out of love for him, a meeting of the Society was held, and the whole sum subscribed, payable one-tenth each year. For about four years the pledge was bravely kept; all expenses were met, and the debt was reduced to $18,000. Then came the hard times of 1874–6, which swept through our church and society like a whirlwind, crippling half our members, and reducing the ability of all. And so it was the old story again. The debt, which always hung like a cloud over our church, increased to $25,000, which now exists. About two years ago the Old South Society voted us $10,000 if we would raise the balance. We set about it

at once, and soon had the amount conditionally subscribed; but before the subscription was completed the courts interfered, and made a decree preventing the payment.

Since then we have reduced expenses, and made all pew-taxes and all bills payable monthly, so that we are now fully paying all expenses and interest, and the debt is not increasing. I am indebted to the compiler of our Church Manual, from which I have quoted freely, for many of the facts which have been stated.

Although we have labored under the shadow of a debt for fifty years, — longer than the pilgrimage through the wilderness, — and till only one of our original number, Mr. Barry, is left, we have no thought of being discouraged. Indeed, we are thankful and hopeful.

The very land on which our church stands has increased in value until it is worth more than double our whole debt. Two years ago we could have sold the property for about one hundred thousand dollars.

All the members of our church and society are

united in bonds of warm friendship. No divisions, misunderstandings, or bickerings exist. The writer has been a member of the prudential or business committee for sixteen years, and during that time every vote of the committee has been unanimous! All contribute liberally to the common cause, according to their means. The man who said he had been a Christian ten years, and it had never cost him a dollar, is not a member of our congregation.

We look back, and see that our church has done a noble work. It has truly been a missionary church. Our members have gone out among the poor and suffering, carrying help and comfort with them; and sacrifices have been made by many of our members for others, almost beyond belief. Then we have a large number of good and true young men, — a larger number in proportion than any church known to us, — about forty having united with the church within a comparatively short time; and all of them give promise of real Christian lives and work.

As soon as business revives a little, we mean to

set to work, — indeed, we are starting now, — and we mean to pay every dollar of our debt; and then, freed from heavy interest charges, we will help other churches suffering as we have done. The shadow has rested on us a long time; but we feel that light and relief are close at hand, that the prayers of half a century are soon to be answered; and that we are the men through whose efforts and labor, under God's blessing, the answer is to come.

We look back over the long years, and are very thankful for all our Master's good gifts. We look forward with confidence, with hope, and with undoubting faith and trust in God.

OFFICERS

OF

Berkeley Street Congregational Society.

Clerk.

JOSEPH A. TORREY.

Treasurer.

MYRON D. BROOKS.

Auditors.

WHITING H. HOLLISTER. BARNA S. SNOW.

Prudential Committee.

STILLMAN B. ALLEN. WILLIAM H. WARNER.
FRANKLIN SNOW. S. BRAINARD PRATT.
BENJAMIN F. DEWING.

Committee on Pews.

MYRON D. BROOKS. FREDERICK A. JOHNSON.
EDWARD A. GILMAN.

Committee on Music.

BARNA S. SNOW.

OFFICERS

OF

Berkeley Street Congregational Church.

Pastor.

Rev. WILLIAM BURNET WRIGHT.

Deacons.

S. BRAINARD PRATT.
WILLIAM H. WARNER,
BARNA S. SNOW.
FRANKLIN SNOW.
JOSEPH A. TORREY.
WHITING H. HOLLISTER, *Acting.*

Clerk.

EDWARD A. GILMAN.

Assistant Clerk.

FRANK O. WHITNEY.

Examining Committee.

Pastor, Deacons, and Clerk, *ex-officio.*

BENJAMIN F. BURGESS.
BENJAMIN F. DEWING.
MYRON D. BROOKS.
GEORGE H. WHEELER.
HENRY S. ADAMS.
GEORGE E. NOYES.

Superintendent of Foreign Mission Work.

Deacon S. BRAINARD PRATT.

Superintendent of Home Mission Work.

Deacon BARNA S. SNOW.

OFFICERS AND TEACHERS

OF

Berkeley Street Sunday School.

Pastor.

WILLIAM BURNET WRIGHT.

Officers for 1877.

BARNA S. SNOW	*Superintendent.*
S. BRAINARD PRATT, MYRON D. BROOKS	*Assistants.*
WILLIAM A. WILCOX	*Secretary and Treasurer.*
ALBERT G. ROBINSON	*Librarian.*
A. S. HIGGINS, W. A. NUTTER	*Assistants.*

Teachers.

Mr. FRANKLIN SNOW.	Mr. R. W. TURNER.
Mr. D. YOUNGMAN.	Mr. W. H. SEARS.
Mr. HENRY S. ADAMS.	Mr. J. A. HASKELL.
Mr. DAVID J. EDWARDS.	Mr. EDGAR H. WEBSTER.
Mr. WALTER C. BATES.	Mr. GEORGE E. HYDE.
Mr. J. H. CHASE.	Mrs. A. S. TAYLOR.
Mr. W. L. LAWRENCE.	Mrs. G. E. NOYES.
Mr. C. B. MITCHELL.	Mrs. S. B. PRATT.
Mr. W. H. WARNER.	Mrs. F. E. RUMERY.
Mr. S. B. PRATT.	Miss A. M. SNOW.
Mr. EDWARD S. ROBINSON.	Miss E. F. SNOW.
Mr. J. R. HALIBURTON.	Miss A. P. BATES.
Mr. O. B. BRIDGMAN.	Miss M. WHITNEY.
Mr. JOHN GARDNER.	Miss E. F. CHASE.
Mr. J. P. BIRD.	Miss C. E. HASTINGS.
Mr. STILLMAN B. ALLEN.	Miss M. H. LANCASTER.
Mr. WILLIS B. ALLEN.	Miss A. L. ADAMS.
Mr. G. W. B. LAWRENCE.	Miss L. MYRES.
MR. JOSEPH A. TORREY.	Miss EMMA E. CHASE.
MR. G. E. NOYES.	Miss KATIE BATES.
MR. EDWARD A. GILMAN.	Miss MINNIE FRYE.

Infant Class. — Mrs. J. A. HASKELL, Miss E. L. SNOW.